

Washington, DC - Yesterday, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA – 07) voted in favor of seven public health bills as part of National Public Health Week. Those bills deal with myriad issues, ranging from emergency medical services for children to traumatic brain injuries. All seven of the bills passed. — “These bills represent a key step in ensuring that American citizens are healthy and well, and as I have stated before, America’s strong health security necessarily bolsters our overall national security,” said Congressman Sestak. “These bills address issues ranging from health screenings for newborn babies to cytology testing. Furthermore, they provide for the research and discovery that helps doctors and scientists to better aid in the prevention, detection, and treatment of numerous health conditions and diseases.”

This week in his district office, the Congressman addressed various health care issues when he met with a group of home healthcare companies to discuss issues ranging from competitive bidding to Medicare equipments access. In addition, this morning, he visited the Milagre School for autistic children to tour the facility and discuss his advances in autism-based legislation. The Congressman is a co-sponsor of H.R. 2609, which is the Empowering Children with Autism through Education Act. In addition, the Congressman is a cosponsor of HR 1881, the Expanding the Promise for individuals with Autism Act of 2007. He also noted that he has working with the Department of Defense to have TRICARE –its medical system—approve Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) treatment for autism to be established not just as an educational service for children but as a health service. This change will permit better access for the full range of treatment autistic children require.

The bills that Congressman Sestak voted on today are as follows:

H.R. 1198, Early Hearing Detection & Intervention Act: The Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) program is a critical Centers for Disease Control program intended to identify and help infants with hearing loss. This bill reauthorizes the program through FY 2013 and expands it to provide screening and intervention services for young children (the program is currently limited to newborns and infants). Early detection of hearing problems is critical to developing and implementing an effective treatment program for children who experience hearing loss. When EHDI was first authorized in 1999, only 3 percent of all babies were being screened for hearing loss at birth; today, 93 percent of babies are screened within one month of birth.

H.R. 2464, Wakefield Act (Emergency Medical Services for Children): This bill reauthorizes through FY 2011 and makes improvements in the Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC) program, which is designed to improve emergency medical services for children needing trauma or critical care. For example, it extends the length of time for which a grant may be awarded to four years, from three. There are over 30 million child and teen visits annually to our nation’s emergency rooms. And yet many emergency services are still designed for adults. Since the EMSC program was created 20 years ago, major improvements in emergency care for children have been realized. Injury-related deaths have dropped by 40 percent over that

period of time.

H.R. 1237, Cytology Proficiency Improvement Act: This bill is designed to improve the analysis of tests for cervical cancer by ensuring that health care professionals who read tests for cervical cancer are skilled in today's medical technology. It modernizes the cervical cancer testing program by requiring continuing medical education for pathologists to assess their diagnostic skills and ensure they keep up with the latest practices. The program is modeled after a similar quality standards program for reading mammograms. The American Cancer Society predicted 11,150 women in the U.S. would be diagnosed with cervical cancer last year and 3,670 women would die from the disease. The way to cut down on the number of deaths is to ensure that all cervical cancer tests are read correctly.

S. 845, Keeping Seniors Safe from Falls Act: The bill launches a comprehensive preventative care program to reduce the number and severity of falls by the elderly. It directs HHS to implement directives to reduce falls, including improving the identification of seniors who have a high risk of falling; supporting education campaigns focused on reducing and preventing falls and on educating health professionals about fall risk, assessment and prevention; and conducting research to reduce falls. Nationally, 42 percent of all nursing home admissions take place as a direct result of one or more injurious geriatric falls.

H.R. 2063, Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Management Act: A critical issue is helping schools deal with food allergies among their student population. Last year, the Congress appropriated \$491,000 for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to develop guidelines for schools regarding food allergies and anaphylaxis (a severe allergic reaction involving multiple organs). This bill requires HHS, in consultation with the Department of Education, to develop a policy for schools on appropriate management and emergency plans for children with food allergies and anaphylaxis. The policy would be provided to schools within one year after enactment, and schools could voluntarily implement the policy. The bill also authorizes HHS to award grants to local school districts to help them in implementing the policy.

S. 1858, Newborn Screening Saves Lives Act: This bill educates parents and health care providers about newborn health screening, improves follow-up care for infants with an illness detected through newborn screening, and helps states expand and improve their newborn screening programs. Incredible advances in medical technology have equipped us to better screen and treat infants for congenital, genetic and metabolic disorders that, if left untreated, could lead to severe disability and death. It authorizes funding to help states expand and improve their programs. It also helps to ensure the quality of laboratories involved in newborn screening, so that tests are as accurate as possible and infants receive appropriate care.

House Amendment to S. 793, Traumatic Brain Injury Act: This bill renews through FY 2012 the Traumatic Brain Injury Act, which authorizes the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to provide state grants for patients with traumatic brain injury to enter treatment and rehabilitation programs. The thousands of brain injury survivors who are returning home from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan are joining the 5.3 million similarly afflicted Americans here at home. Indeed, TBI is the leading cause of death and disability among young Americans. The legislation would require the CDC to monitor brain injury incidents and create a reporting system to track the condition. It also directs CDC to study treatment techniques and NIH to conduct basic research to improve treatment.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.